

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF)

Reduction in Force (RIF) is a structured, orderly process through which employees compete for available positions or continued employment during downsizing and closure. RIF regulations are largely derived from the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944. The statutory provisions are contained in Sections 3501-3503, Title 5, United States Code, while the regulatory provisions are published in Part 351 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. Department of Defense guidance is contained in Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) memorandum dated November 2, 1993, subject: Approval and Announcement of Reduction in Force.

Management application of RIF procedures is required when an employee faces separation or downgrade due to the effects of reorganization, reductions resulting from mission or technological change, lack of work, reduced funds, or base realignment and closure. The placement rights of the employee depend on the competitive RIF process based on the employee's retention standing and qualifications. Administration of the RIF process requires the maintenance of retention lists, RIF action documentation, and copies of employee notices. Overall time for RIF administration in the Department of Defense has been significantly reduced by the use of automated RIF programs that determine employee placement rights, prepare notices, and document all required actions. RIF administration, previously measured in months, may now be measured in days.

- Management has several responsibilities that derive from reduction in force policy and procedures.
 - They must keep potentially affected employees informed at all steps of the process, ensure consistent application of the RIF process, counsel employees on their individual rights, and advise them of outplacement opportunities.
 - Employees must be provided advance notice of the adverse action, must be provided the opportunity to review pertinent regulations and program records, and must be made aware of the process for filing appeals.
- Structure of the RIF competitive process depends on the:
 - Competitive area. Geographical and organizational boundaries within which employees compete for retention in RIF
 - Competitive level. Groupings of positions within the competitive area which are at the same grade and are so similar in duties and responsibilities that they are considered interchangeable.
 - Retention standing. Order in which employees are ranked in their competitive level. Order is determined by tenure of employment (employment status), veterans' preference, length of creditable service (may include military time even

if the employee is not a veteran for RIF purposes), and performance. (Creditable service is increased based on performance.)

- RIF competition occurs in two ways:
 - Abolishment of a position in a competitive level releases lowest standing employee from the competitive level (two abolish actions release two employees, three release three, etc.); remaining employees retain positions; released employees enter into RIF competition.
 - Employees competing in RIF are placed in vacant positions (at Component's discretion) or displace lower standing employees (from positions for which the RIF affected employee is fully qualified)
 - Generally, employees with the lower retention standing face separation or downgrade first.